

Alan Shepard Chronology

1923 Born Alan Bartlett Shepard Jr. on Nov. 18, 1923, in East Derry, N.H.

1940 Graduated from Pinkerton Academy, Derry, N.H.

1944 Graduated from U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., with bachelor of science degree. Assigned to destroyer Cogswell, deployed in Pacific during World War II.

1945 Married former Louise Brewer of Kennett Square, Pa.

1947 Earned Navy wings after training at Corpus Christi, Texas, and Pensacola, Fla. Assigned to Fighter Squadron 42 at Norfolk, Va., and Jacksonville, Fla., serving tours aboard aircraft carriers in Mediterranean. Daughter, Laura (now Snyder), born.

1950 Graduated from U.S. Navy Test Pilot School at Patuxent River, Md. Participated in flight test work and was assigned to Fighter Squadron 193 at Moffett Field, Calif., a night fighter unit flying Banshee jets. Made two tours to the Western Pacific onboard the carrier *Oriskany*.

1951 Daughter, Julie (now Coleman), born.

1957 Graduated from Naval War College, Newport, R.I. Assigned to staff of commander-in-chief, Atlantic Fleet, as aircraft readiness officer.

April 1959 Selected as one of original seven Mercury astronauts.

1961 On May 5, became first American in space aboard Freedom 7 spacecraft, launched as a Mercury-Redstone vehicle on a ballistic trajectory suborbital flight that reached an altitude of 116 statute miles and landed 302 statute miles down Atlantic Missile Range. Awarded NASA Distinguished Service medal, presented by President John F. Kennedy.

1963 Began training as commander of first manned Gemini flight. Grounded by NASA flight surgeons. Designated chief of the Astronaut Office with responsibility for all astronaut activities.

1969 Cleared again for flight following corrective surgery for ear condition.

1971 Commanded Apollo 14 with Stuart A. Roosa, command module pilot, and Edgar D. Mitchell, lunar module pilot, on nine-day flight, third lunar landing mission, which launched Jan. 31 and landed Feb. 9. Spent 217 hours in space, including more than nine hours on Moon with Mitchell. On returning to Earth, resumed duties as chief of the Astronaut Office. Appointed by President Richard M. Nixon as a delegate to the 26th United Nations General Assembly, serving through the entire assembly which lasted from September to December.

1974 Retired from NASA and the Navy in August.

1979 Awarded Congressional

Shepard tells story of rich life in his own words

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problem surgically," Shepard recalled. The operation involved inserting a tube to enlarge the chamber and reduce excess pressure. A possible side effect was loss of hearing.

"So I went out there under an assumed name," Shepard said. Thus was patient Victor Polis created. Only the doctor and nurse knew his true identity.

The surgery was successful. "After about a day I was out of there," he said. After several months he was returned to flight status.

Shepard, as many have said, was an original, not afraid to push the envelop in a calculated, precise sort of way. Here are some of this thoughts on highlights of a unique and remarkable space flight career.

- On April 9, 1959: "That was one of the happiest days of my life ... the day we first showed up officially as the

first astronauts in the United States."

- On moving into the new environment of space: It was "the challenge of being able to control a new vehicle in a new environment. It's something I'd been doing for many, many years as a Navy pilot."
- On being selected to make the first flight: After total elation, "I felt sorry for my buddies ... They all came over and shook my hand, and pretty soon I was the only guy left in the room."
- On President Kennedy's announcement about sending a man to the moon: "Oh, we were delighted. But there was a little bit of a gulp in there, because he put a time cap on the deal. I don't think any of us thought we'd be able to make it within 81/2 years."
- On Deke Slayton being grounded because of a heart irregularity: At that point the feeling of competitiveness with Deke turned into cama-

raderie ... a sense of 'Let's get you back on schedule, old buddy, somehow.'"

- On being grounded himself: "Obviously, being grounded was the worst thing that has ever happened to me."
- On the Apollo 1 fire: "I don't think there's any question that the Apollo 1 fire did shape up the whole system. Perhaps because of Apollo 1, Apollo went on to be a hugely successful series of flights."
- On Apollo 13: "I think that was probably NASA's finest hour. From a pilot's point of view, it was just as important as stepping on the Moon."
- On seeing Earth from the moon: "That was an overwhelming feeling in seeing the beauty of the planet on one hand but the fragility of it on the other."
- On hitting a golf ball on the Moon: "So far, I'm the only person to have hit a golf ball on the moon—probably

will be for some time. It was designed to be a fun thing. Fortunately, it still is a fun thing. The makeshift club is with the U.S. Golf Association in their museum."

- On John Glenn's second flight: "I've been saying for years that the taxpayers didn't get their money's worth out of Glenn, because he made one flight and immediately went into Congress. I called him the other day and said, 'John, I'm glad that you're going to give me one more flight for my tax dollars.' I think it's a good thing. I think we'll learn something from it."
- Would Shepard like to fly again? "Of course I would."
- On looking back: "It's been a great part of my life, to be involved in the space program, specifically in being allowed to make a couple of really recognizable, spectacular, lucky missions."



JSC Photo by Mark Sowa

NASA astronauts perform a flyover as part of a tree-planting ceremony in honor of Alan Shepard at the Astronaut Memorial Grove. The live oak tree was planted as part of Saturday's memorial services honoring Shepard, who died July 21 at the age of 74 after a lengthy illness.

Mercury astronauts mourn loss from 'brotherhood'

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this realm, one day we will all be together again."

At a subsequent tree-planting ceremony at JSC's memorial grove, family members and JSC Director George Abbey planted a live oak for Shepard. He was the 28th astronaut so honored. Among other trees there are memorials to fellow Mercury astronauts Gus Grissom and Deke Slayton.

At the ceremony, Abbey said Shepard "represented the best this country has to offer. Alan Shepard has been and always will be a part of each step we take into space."

The ceremony concluded with taps played by astronaut and ISS Phase 1 Program Manager Frank Culbertson, and a missing man flyover by NASA T-38s.

Named as one of the nation's original seven Mercury astronauts in 1959, Shepard became the first to carry America's banner into space on May 5, 1961, riding a Redstone rocket on a 15-minute suborbital flight that took him and his Freedom 7 Mercury capsule 115 miles in altitude and 302 miles downrange from Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Buoyed by the overwhelming response to Shepard's flight, which

made the astronaut an instant hero and a household name, President John F. Kennedy set the nation on a course to the Moon, declaring before a joint session of Congress just three weeks later, "I believe this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before the decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth."

Shepard was the fifth man to walk on the Moon, and the oldest, at the age of 47.

Shepard, however, was almost bypassed for a trip to the Moon. He had to overcome an inner ear problem called Meuniere's syndrome that grounded him for several years following his initial pioneering flight.

An operation eventually cured the problem and Shepard was named to command the Apollo 14 mission. On Jan. 31, 1971, Shepard, Command Module pilot Stuart Roosa and Lunar Module pilot Edgar Mitchell embarked for the Moon atop a Saturn 5 rocket. Shepard and Mitchell landed the lunar module Antares on February 5 in the Fra Mauro highlands while Roosa orbited overhead in the command ship Kitty Hawk.

Shepard planted his feet on the lunar surface a few hours later, declaring, "Al is on the surface, and

it's been a long way, but we're here." During two excursions on the surface totaling nine hours, Shepard and Mitchell set up a science station, collected 92 pounds of rocks and gathered soil samples from the mountainous region.

Before leaving the Moon, Shepard (an avid golfer) hit two golf balls with a makeshift club. The first landed in a nearby crater. The second was hit squarely, and in the one-sixth gravity of the Moon, Shepard said it traveled "miles and miles and miles."

Shepard's death leaves only four survivors among the original Mercury 7 astronauts: Sen. John Glenn, Scott Carpenter, L. Gordon Cooper and Walter Schirra.

Born Alan Bartlett Shepard Jr. on Nov. 18, 1923, in East Derry, N.H., he received a bachelor of science degree from the United States Naval Academy in 1944. Upon graduation, he married Louise Brewer, whom he met while at Annapolis. Shepard received his wings as a Naval aviator in 1947 and served several tours aboard aircraft carriers. In 1950, he attended Naval Test Pilot School at Patuxent River, Md., and became a test pilot and instructor there. He later attended the Naval War College at Newport, R.I., and after graduat-

ing, was assigned to the staff of the commander-in-chief, Atlantic Fleet, as an aircraft readiness officer.

In August 1974, Shepard, then a rear admiral, retired from both NASA and the Navy and became chairman of Marathon Construction Corp. in Houston. He later founded his own business, Seven Fourteen Enterprises, named for his two missions on Freedom 7 and Apollo 14.

In 1984, he and the other surviving Mercury astronauts, along with Betty Grissom, the widow of astronaut Virgil I. (Gus) Grissom, founded the Mercury Seven Foundation to raise money for scholarships for science and engineering students in college. In 1995, the organization was renamed the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation. Shepard was elected president and chairman of the foundation, posts he held until October 1997, when he turned over both positions to former astronaut James Lovell.

Survivors include his widow, Louise, daughters Julie, Laura and Alice and six grandchildren.

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation, 6225 Vectorspace Boulevard, Titusville, Fla., 32780.

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